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Immediate Release

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Environment Department Signs \$1.8 Million Deal to Improve LANL Oversight

(Santa Fe, NM) — The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) and the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) have signed a Memorandum of Agreement to improve NMED's environmental oversight of Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL).

The agreement will provide a total of \$1.8 million from NNSA to support the NMED's efforts in Fiscal Year 2006 to process and review LANL permits, as well as to review documents required under the recently enacted fence-to-fence cleanup order. This Consent Order requires cleanup of LANL's legacy wastes by 2015.

NMED Secretary Ron Curry and Ed Wilmot, NNSA's Los Alamos Site Office manager, signed the agreement on Sept. 27. The funds will be provided directly to NMED to buy equipment and cover operating costs pertaining to regulatory oversight of LANL.

"This funding is another step in a long process to ensure New Mexico's citizens are adequately protected against LANL's wastes," Curry said. "Without the leverage of the historic Consent Order, reached with the support of Governor Richardson and after nearly two years of tough negotiations, this critical funding would never have materialized."

The fence-to-fence clean up, signed in March, sets a clear, legally binding path for LANL to follow as it works to address its decades-old waste. The Consent Order requires comprehensive investigation and clean up of environmental contamination at LANL, including remediation of material disposal areas, ground water and other areas of contamination. The Order is between NMED, the U.S. Department of Energy and the Regents of the University of California, which operate LANL.

The Consent Order also requires NMED to process in a timely manner LANL's investigative reports, work plans, risk assessment reports, corrective measure evaluation reports and other documents. The funds provided through the MOA will help NMED meet its obligations.

For further information, contact Adam Rankin, Communications Director, NMED at (505) 827-0314.

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